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FROM AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD FOR D, M, IO, L AND DSS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OFDP](#) [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: UNITED NATIONS PARTICIPATION IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

¶1. I have received a February 5 letter from Vijay Nambiar, SYG Ban's chief of staff, in which he asks me for assistance in arranging engagement between the UN and the USG "at the highest level" to ensure operational cohesion and "prudent planning in the event of a security crisis" presumably resulting from a natural disaster, pandemic, or terrorist attack. The text of the letter follows in paragraph 2 below.

The UN's Under-Secretary-General for Security, Sir David Veness, was invited to participate in the Summer 2007 TOPOFF IV exercise and found it very useful and productive. Nambiar and Veness and their teams would like to be kept abreast of new developments and plans in the area of crisis management response so that the UN's own security plans function in tandem with those of the USG and state/local authorities. The UN would also like to participate as appropriate in DHS-led or interagency security exercises especially in New York, but elsewhere as may be indicated. I endorse the UN's request and would like to be responsive to Nambiar as to how and with whom coordination might best be achieved.

¶2. Begin text of Nambiar letter: I have the honour to write to you on the subject of crisis management and response as it relates to the possible needs of the United Nations in emergency circumstances.

I am cognizant of the fact that since 2005, great strides have been made in the United States domestic preparedness and coordination mechanisms, including the National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS). At the same time, the United Nations have also been working diligently to improve its crisis management resources under the auspices of its Senior Emergency Preparedness Team (SEPT) which I chair, and which is composed of the senior-most management within the United Nations Secretariat. The SEPT oversees our Crisis Operation Group (COG), which is chaired by Mr. David Veness, Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security.

In October 2007, Mr. Veness had the opportunity to engage with your authorities in their latest biennial exercise TOPOFF IV. Many valuable lessons emerged from Mr. Veness, participation in this exercise, but more importantly, it only confirmed how vital it is for the United Nations to be known and understood in the middle of an emergency by those entities in the United States system who would be leading and coordinating the host country response in the event of a crisis, for example, the Department of Homeland Security.

To proceed with our efforts, we have identified those organs and departments of the United Nations Secretariat that are core to the essential functioning of the United Nations and would need to be able to continue to function in the event of domestic crisis, assuming different scenarios. These include the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and his office, the Department of

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Peacekeeping Operations, Situation Centre, the Office of Humanitarian Affairs, the Department of Management (essential functions), as well as the SEPT, COG and, of course, the Department of Safety and Security.

Although many of our senior officials are already engaged on a very cooperative and productive working level with their counterparts in various host country agencies on a variety of safety, security and operational concern, we still need, nevertheless, to ensure prudent planning with those United States authorities who would be leading the response in the event of a crisis. In this respect, I would be very grateful for your assistance in furthering our engagement with the relevant United States authorities at the highest level. This would indeed be a very valuable action and one that would ensure that we have optimum crisis management capabilities in place that function in tandem with the crisis management capabilities of our host country.

I should welcome the opportunity to meet with you at your convenience, to provide any further clarifications you may need at this point or to discuss how best to move this proposal forward.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration. End Text.
KHALILZAD